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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/31/20; A/C.1/31/3)

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Mr. BENNETT (United States of America): The year 1976 has been an active and successful year both in outer space and in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We should like to take this opportunity to call the Committee's attention to several developments which we regard as particularly interesting and significant.

During the past year, the United States has continued to participate co-operatively with other nations in the exploration of outer space. We have, for example, launched Helios-2, built by the Federal Republic of Germany, the second scientific satellite to investigate the properties of interplanetary space close to the sun. In January we launched the CTS, an experimental high-powered communications satellite, developed jointly with Canada.

In co-operation with the United States Agency for International Development, using the ATS-6 satellite, NASA is currently conducting demonstrations of the applications of space age technology for the benefit of developing countries. These demonstrations will be seen in 27 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

In addition, consistent with our pledge to provide non-discriminatory reimbursable launch assistance for foreign satellite projects for peaceful purposes, the United States launched the first Indonesian communications satellite (Palapa) and another in a series of INTELSAT launches.

During July the United States, as one event in the Bicentennial of American independence, made the first successful soft landing on the planet Mars with a Viking lander; this feat was repeated with another Viking lander in September.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

Dissemination of early results of this historic programme has already begun, adding further to man's understanding of the universe. Later this afternoon my delegation will be presenting a slide showing together with a commentary by the distinguished scientist and researcher Professor Carl Sagan of Cornell University dealing with the Mars landing. We appreciate your co-operation, Mr. Chairman, and that of the Committee in enabling this showing to take place this afternoon.

With a new space transportation system based on the reusable shuttle rapidly becoming a reality, increasing emphasis has been given in 1976 to planning for its international use. Four Announcements of Opportunity have been issued world-wide to solicit proposals for experiments to be carried on the Shuttle during its Orbital Flight Test programme, on the first two missions which will use the Shuttle's Spacelab, and on a free-flying Long Duration Exposure Facility. The development of Spacelab, which is an unprecedented European contribution to the Space Transportation System, is being managed by the European Space Agency. It passed the midway point in 1976. Development was begun this year on a Canadian contribution to the Space Transportation System -- a Remote Manipulator System for use with the Space Shuttle orbiter vehicle.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

On 31 July 1975, India completed the one-year broadcast phase of the Indian Satellite Instructional Television Experiment using the NASA Applications Technology Satellite ATS-6 to transmit educational programmes directly to some 2,400 villages in rural India. The television programmes, ground transmitting station, and village receiver sets were all funded and built by India. The social impact of the programmes in the villages is still being analysed, but the experiment has demonstrated the practicality of satellite-based instructional broadcasting for developing countries and has aroused interest throughout the world. Programmes containing clear, do-it-yourself instructions -- in agriculture and animal husbandry, for instance -- were particularly popular. I look forward to hearing more on this subject from our colleague, the representative of India.

Our intensified upper atmospheric research programme has focused on the possible threat to the earth's stratospheric ozone shield from man-made fluorocarbon compounds, widely used as refrigerants and aerosol propellants. Because of the global nature of this problem, we made special efforts in 1976 to undertake co-operative international stratospheric research activities and to inform as broad a segment of the world scientific community as possible about research under way in the United States. To foster improved international co-ordination of stratospheric research and policy planning, an International Conference on the Stratosphere and Related Problems was held at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, from 15-17 September 1976. The conference included sessions on recent scientific research findings and discussions of the policy implications of stratospheric pollution.

We share what appears now to be the general belief that all States, regardless of their stage of economic and technical development, can realize substantial benefits from an open system of earth observation from satellites such as the Landsat system with which we are experimenting. The United States has already shared and continues to make available to all interested parties at least one-time coverage of over 90 per cent of the earth's land surface. Researchers and scientists in over 125 countries are obtaining Landsat data for a wide variety of uses. This ever-growing international interest stems primarily from the many benefits that can be derived from use of Landsat data. Let me briefly cite just a few of the many significant results that have been reported.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

For instance, geologists in Bolivia have recently discovered deposits of lithium and potassium as a result of computer-aided interpretation of Landsat data. A new iron-ore deposit was discovered in Egypt using Landsat data as well. In Bangladesh, Landsat investigators discovered that eight new islands with an area of 100 square miles had developed in the Bay of Bengal as a result of the build-up of sediment washed down from the Himalayas. A forest inventory in Thailand using Landsat revealed to forestry managers that there had been a significant, previously unobserved decline in the amount of forested area in that country.

The World Bank has also been using Landsat information extensively in some of its projects. For example, Landsat imagery taken before and at the height of flooding in Pakistan was used by the Government of Pakistan and the Bank to assess the extent of damage and to direct timely aid to farmers attempting to reclaim their crop land. Mexican investigators have compiled land-use maps of the entire country and have been using Landsat to study potential land use as well, including potential agricultural productivity, carrying capacity for cattle, and erosion risk. We look forward to an ever-broadening circle of benefits from this highly valuable programme.

The Outer Space Committee will be holding its fifteenth annual session next year. The anticipation of this occasion suggests a moment's reflection on the work of this unique institution.

I would cite but a few examples of the invaluable work undertaken and accomplished by Member States in the Outer Space Committee forum. Although the first three years of the Committee's activities -- the period 1963 through 1965 -- were marked by political and ideological controversy, its 28 members during 1966 proved able to negotiate the Outer Space Treaty, the basic and much-applauded treaty instrument establishing rules to encourage international co-operation in the conduct of peaceful space activities. A principal adornment of the Treaty is the prohibition in article IV against orbiting or otherwise placing nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space. The Treaty negotiators had the foresight to take action to prevent developments which no one wanted but which otherwise might have become inevitable. They gave proof to what a former permanent

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

representative of the United States, Governor Adlai Stevenson, once described as the call to action in the truism that it is far easier to agree not to arm an arms-free environment than to disarm an environment already bristling with military hardware.

The Outer Space Treaty's insistence on international co-operation in space-related programmes as the fundamental objective of the community of nations remains as bright a beacon for the next decade as it has been during the past 10 years. Its establishment of a régime characterized by openness and non-appropriation, the guarantee of freedom for every nation and group of nations to explore and use space without discrimination, the requirement of continuing and substantial exchanges of scientific information, and the expressed goal that space activities should be carried on for the benefit of all mankind, rather than for narrowly or selfishly conceived purposes, represent an encouragement for the future as well as an achievement of the past.

A second example of the high achievement of the Outer Space Committee, now comprising 37 members, is its work in the field of television broadcasting by satellite. The full application of this technology is still largely prospective; broadcasting by satellite directly into unmodified conventional individual television sets is not yet a possibility. But the technology is already being widely tested in Canada and India, and has just been demonstrated further through a series of broadcasts in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The Outer Space Committee has made a fundamental contribution through its educational work in acquainting Governments with the likely benefits and costs involved in these future activities.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

My delegation is looking forward to the evaluation being made by the Government of India of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment, which I mentioned earlier. An appreciation and realistic appraisal of this United States-India experiment and of possible patterns of international co-operation have been greatly stimulated by the Outer Space Committee. Its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee undertook the first international analysis on a governmental level of this new technology, and a special Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites held five sessions which demonstrated that its benefits can be realized only if the subject is approached on an interdisciplinary basis.

Direct broadcast by satellite provides an illustration of the indispensable need of bringing together diplomats and experts from the scientific, technical, economic, institutional and legal disciplines in order to understand what can flow from prospective technologies. It is against this background of multidisciplinary analysis that the Legal Sub-Committee this year intensified its work of trying to draft principles that can be accepted by States and broadcasting entities for the conduct of satellite television broadcasting once this becomes technically feasible. The Sub-Committee has drawn up statements of nine proposed principles. These principles deal with such matters as broadcasting purposes, international legal parameters, rights and benefits for States, international co-operation, State responsibility, consultation procedures and peaceful settlement, copyright and neighbouring rights, and provision of information to the United Nations. This work has been undertaken on the basis of mutual benefit and conciliation. Extremely difficult issues remain for examination and negotiation. They involve such matters as participation by interested States and broadcasters and practical assistance to that end.

Direct-broadcast satellite technology can make a great contribution to the values proclaimed by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. In the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, participating States stated that they consider "the development of contacts to be an important element in the strengthening of relations and trust among peoples" and that they "make it their aim to facilitate the freer and wider dissemination of information of all kinds, to encourage co-operation in the field of information and the exchange of information with other countries ...". The participants further pledged "to develop the mutual exchange of information with a view to a better knowledge of respective

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

cultural achievements" and "to seek new fields and forms of cultural co-operation". It is in this light that the United States will participate in the difficult but absorbing work of the Legal Sub-Committee in 1977.

The character of international institutions and their procedures is of considerable interest to contemporary diplomats. Wisely conceived procedures can greatly stimulate mutual understanding and mutual appreciation of the problems of other nations. On the other hand, lack of attention to enlightened traditions and practice can make co-operation impossible, as can rigid rules applied without reference to the political and social purposes for which they were originally established.

The history of the Outer Space Committee and its various subsidiary bodies bears witness to the fact that significant results can flow from processes of discussion and mutual conciliation. No vote has ever been taken in the Committee. In all these years the Committee has always operated under the guiding statement made by its Chairman at its first session, on 19 March 1963, that its work would be accomplished by consensus with every effort being made to avoid voting. We recognize that, under a consensus procedure, action may for a long time become impossible if one or more members engage in obstruction. But over the long run, objective needs for progress and the desire of participants to be seen as constructive and mutually sympathetic can achieve far more than results brought about by conventional voting procedures with all their confrontational characteristics and consequences.

I have already touched upon current United States experience with our Landsat remote-sensing activities. This year, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has again noted that the Landsat system continues to provide the international community with data and experience in the new field of remote sensing by satellite of the natural resources and the environment of the earth. Landsat 1 has been operating now for four years, Landsat 2 for more than a year, and an improved Landsat C has been scheduled for launching in the 1977-1978 time-frame. Consideration is already being given to a fourth Landsat among whose characteristics could be improved spectral and spatial resolution.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

Turning to the ground segment of our Landsat system, I should like to point out that, in addition to the United States itself, reception facilities in Canada, Brazil and Italy receive data directly from these satellites in accordance with the terms of bilateral agreements they have negotiated with our National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Argentina, Chile, Iran and Zaire have also concluded agreements with us, and the construction of facilities in these four countries is under way or expected. A temporary station is operating in Pakistan. The Economic Commission for Africa has just endorsed a comprehensive training and station development programme for Africa, and the European Space Agency has formulated a plan for rationalizing Landsat data acquisition and use in Europe. A number of other nations are considering the possibility of establishing stations in 1977 and 1978. As we told the Outer Space Committee earlier, the United States intends to continue to be responsive to the growing interest in the Landsat network.

What are the main fields in which remote-sensing technology holds promise for development? As the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee report identifies them, they include mapping areas of the world and changes in the conditions and use of the earth's surface; agricultural forecasting as an aid to production and distribution; geologic mapping to facilitate mineral-resource exploration and development; hydrological surveys for water-resource identification, planning and pollution monitoring; and land-use surveys for development and transmigration planning. These various uses have interest for developed and developing countries alike. Every country in this hall is concerned with these matters, whatever its particular stage of development and the history and character of its most pressing economic and social needs.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

A working system will be practicable only if data dissemination policies are marked by the same openness and non-discriminatory access that is a hallmark of the Outer Space Treaty. While complete global coverage could be achieved with satellites of the Landsat type with approximately 15 earth stations, the entire system is dependent upon the availability of data without condition or discrimination. The facilities in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Iran, Italy and Zaire will be acquiring data on a regional basis. The bilateral agreements under which they are established oblige the station operators to provide data on reasonable terms and without discrimination to all interested neighbouring and other States.

A certain caution as to the development of this technology is, however, desirable. The costs involved in the space segment are large, and ground segment requirements for adequately trained personnel are considerable. An analysis made by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee helps to understand the system elements and the flow of data involved in remote sensing. It observes that a first element is data acquisition involving the use of satellites and control stations. There follows data reception, utilizing ground-based antennas and receivers. Formatting and recording are then involved in what may be called data pre-processing. There is also data storage and dissemination, involving archiving and reproduction. Resulting data must then be analysed by means of interpretation or user processing. And the objective of these elements is information utilization, that is, practical applications by users.

A further note of circumspection is perhaps appropriate. Even with our own extensive experience with Landsat 1 and 2, we are still in a pre-operational/experimental phase. A fully operational phase remains some years away. What is clear -- and I should like to underscore this point -- is that neither in the current phase nor in an operational framework can this technology develop unless there is ongoing regional co-operation. Observation from space can only be accomplished as a practical matter without regard to boundaries; indeed, much of the valuable information on geology and hydrology, to give but two examples, requires regional observation and would be seriously impaired even if it were practical to observe on a national basis. Moreover, the costs involved, both human and financial, are of such magnitude that few would be able to expect benefits except through open programmes of regional and global co-operation.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

The United States looks forward to continuing its active participation in the invaluable work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in widening understanding of remote sensing. We commend to all delegations a reading of the remote-sensing section of the report of the Sub-Committee in document A/AC.105/170. We hope others will join in disclosing their plans in this fascinating field so as to maximize its contribution to economic and social development around the globe.

The United States also looks forward to participating in the work of the Legal Sub-Committee in drafting principles that States may wish to adopt for the planning, establishment and operation of remote-sensing activities. The underlying themes of international co-operation and mutually agreed sharing of benefits will be as relevant to remote sensing as they are to the Legal Sub-Committee's work in the field of television direct broadcasting.

There will be a new matter before the Outer Space Committee in 1977, which has been put on its agenda through an initiative of the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador Jankowitsch of Austria, and of the delegation of Argentina. This summer, the Committee agreed that Member States should be asked to provide the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee with information on programmes in the field of generation and transmission of solar energy by means of space technology. Of course, the Outer Space Committee is not competent to consider energy questions generally, and it will not be getting into the energy business. But we agree that its mandate can properly include a consideration of the use of space technology for possible programmes involving solar energy generation and transmission, and that a review of the technology by the competent scientists of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will be desirable.

My delegation's discussion this afternoon of some focal points of space activities has necessarily been impressionistic. But even while recognizing the limitations imposed by scarce human, scientific, technical and financial limitations, we have great enthusiasm for the future. Bilateral and regional co-operation in space programmes is growing mightily. The Outer Space Committee is enhancing international understanding of the potential benefits and costs of space technologies. This is exactly what the United Nations should be doing, in the view of my delegation. We applaud the Committee's activities in this field and the benefits which they may help bring to people everywhere.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): Mr. Chairman, on this, the first working day of the First Committee of this thirty-first session of the General Assembly, as I take the floor for the first time, I am pleased to note that I am among friends. Among those friends I count you, and I look forward with great anticipation to the deliberations of this Committee which will be conducted under your wise and experienced chairmanship. I should like to congratulate you and the members of your Bureau and assure you that the Canadian delegation will do all it can to assist you.

Discussion in the General Assembly of issues relating to outer space began 19 years ago. Since then, we have witnessed some spectacular achievements, including the first manned space flight, the landing by man on the moon and, most recently, the successful landings on the planet of Mars. These have been achievements which not only have captured the headlines but have caught the imaginations of people around the world. It is, however, with advances in related but less spectacular areas which have not captured the same headlines but which might prove to be equally important not only in promoting peace and co-operation among the peoples of the world, but also in contributing in a concrete way to world-wide economic and social development that we are concerned today.

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

During the past 19 years, space technology has been applied with increasing effectiveness to communications and to the solution of environmental, agricultural and resource problems. My delegation believes that advances in the last few years in these practical applications of space technology have reached the point where our discussions can and should be constructive and fruitful. The note which we wish to interject in this debate is one of urgency; if we do not make greater progress than we have in the past, technological developments and the expectations of peoples around the world will together render our debate irrelevant. Technological progress, particularly in the fields of remote sensing and direct broadcasting from satellites, has been so rapid that it will become increasingly difficult to impose an internationally-agreed legal framework, which at the same time is also technically feasible, on the systems of satellites which are now operational or are about to become so.

I shall comment in a moment on the areas in which we believe there is a particular need to make more progress, but first, I should like to mention something of the development of Canada's space programme since last we reported to this Committee. Our primary area of concentration continues to be communications by satellite, and there are now three Anik satellites providing communications services to remote Canadian communities. You cannot imagine what this means unless you live in the Canadian Arctic, 3,000 miles away from the centres of population. In June of this year, Canada launched the Communications Technology Satellite (CTS). The CTS, which was built in co-operation with the United States and in association with the European Space Agency, is an experimental satellite. Besides advancing the state of the art as one of the first generations of direct-broadcast satellites, it will carry out socially-oriented experiments in education, long-distance medical diagnosis and health care and community cultural programmes. This is a concrete example of the application of space technology to social as well as technological problems.

During the past year, Canada also embarked on a major programme, in the order of about \$70 million, for the design, development and construction of the remote manipulator system which is to be a component of the NASA Space Shuttle. The remote manipulator is a mechanical arm which astronauts aboard the space shuttle will use for deploying, retrieving and repairing satellites in orbit.

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

The deployment of the technology relating to remote sensing from space of the earth's resources is another area in which Canada has been a pioneer. During the past year, a mobile ground receiving station has been built and is being installed on the east coast of Canada. This is a complete pre-processing and disseminating facility which has been developed at low cost. In fact, the total development cost will be in the order of \$2 million, a sum which should be within the budget expectations of most countries contemplating a role in the peaceful uses of outer space. Accordingly, it is our hope that the adaptability of this facility will be of interest to other countries concerned with the development of a remote-sensing capability.

Canada continues to participate in the experimental aeronautical satellite programme, which is intended to improve oceanic air traffic control. We are also taking part in the negotiations for the establishment of an international maritime satellite system.

I should now like to refer to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space which is before this Committee. We have been encouraged by the progress which has been made during the last year, but we remain concerned about ~~the~~ the number of important issues yet to be resolved.

We are pleased to note that agreement has been reached on the formulation of nine principles to govern direct television broadcasting by means of satellites. But there is a great deal of work yet to be done, and in our view it should be done soon. As we pointed out at the nineteenth session of the Outer Space Committee in June, there is a danger that our efforts to establish a coherent and practical set of principles will be overtaken by the rapid development of the technology in this field. The danger exists that we will still be debating when television transmissions by means of satellites will be received directly by individual home or community receivers. If such broadcasting is not brought within an agreed international legal régime, and if it is carried out without the consent of the ~~the~~ State concerned and without due regard ^{or} consideration for its social and cultural needs, there will be a new source of controversy and potential conflict to add to those we already have on earth.

In order to identify positive action which can be taken by the United Nations General Assembly prior to the establishment of operational broadcast systems, it is

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

important that we move as expeditiously as possible to reach agreement on a full set of principles, including principles concerning the outstanding but central issues of co-operation, participation and mutual agreement or consent. It is our opinion that the Canada-Sweden proposals, first tabled in 1973, are a sound basis for a legal framework which will both give States the means to regulate their communications systems and ensure the freest possible exchange of information.

The draft resolution which Canada will be co-sponsoring at this session directs the Legal Sub-Committee to consider as a matter of high priority the establishment of a set of principles to govern direct television broadcasting, and we will do our best to play a constructive role in these considerations.

I should like now to turn to a second area of major Canadian interest: remote sensing. At the last session of the Legal Sub-Committee, five common elements identified earlier were converted into draft principles and three further common elements were agreed upon. This work provides a solid basis for further drafting in the Legal Sub-Committee.

At the last session of the Outer Space Committee, my delegation referred to a number of draft principles which we had tabled in the Legal Sub-Committee. It is our view that these principles include the concepts necessary for the adoption of a legal framework which safeguards national interests without creating obstacles in the way of maximum co-operative utilization of remote-sensing technology: in short, for a balanced régime which would be cautionary without being stifling.

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretariat and all those involved in producing, editing and compiling the various reports and studies on remote sensing and its applications, which have proved so useful to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We believe that the United Nations can play an important co-ordinating role in the areas of training and technical assistance. With regard to training, those experts from Canada who have recently visited a number of developing countries concur with the belief of the Sub-Committee, as reflected in its report, that increasing emphasis should be placed upon on-site rather than centralized training. We are gratified that, during the past year, various practical steps for promoting understanding of remote sensing, such as panels, seminars and specialized workshops, have been continued. We have been pleased to be able to make scientists available to assist in various United Nations studies and we will continue to send, to the best of our ability, experts to specific countries to help identify national needs and opportunities.

My delegation is pleased to note that progress is being made in the general recognition of the need to consider carefully the question of holding a United Nations conference on outer space. We are convinced that a thorough and balanced study by the Secretariat of all the issues involved in the convening of such a conference will allow the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at the next session to give proper and adequate consideration to this question.

My delegation would like to place on record the concern it shares with other delegations over the need for greater co-ordination between the two Sub-Committees of the Outer Space Committee. We support the recommendation contained in the report of the Committee that the respective mandates of the Sub-Committees involved be fully utilized. We would also support any other specific and constructive proposals which would enable the Committee to make further progress in resolving the issues which are before it. In particular, the Canadian delegation to the session of the Committee held last June advanced the idea that, in the representation of national delegations to meetings of both the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, there should be some overlapping of membership with the particular object in view that lawyers and scientists should both be present and participating in the sessions of both Sub-Committees.

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

In conclusion, I should like to state that the Canadian delegation will be very pleased to co-sponsor the omnibus resolution on the peaceful uses of outer space which is to be introduced to this Committee on Thursday by my colleague from the delegation of Austria. It is our belief that, with the clear guidance provided by this draft resolution, progress can be made during the next year and in this collective effort I pledge Canada's full support and co-operation. Finally, I should like to reiterate, in the words of the preamble to the draft resolution which will be introduced on Friday, that we are very conscious of the common interest of mankind in furthering the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in extending to States the benefits derived therefrom, as well as the importance of international co-operation in this field, for which a focal point should be provided by the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to the officers of the Committee and to me personally. I especially appreciate his assurance of co-operation with me and the other members of the bureau in the carrying out of the functions assigned to us in this Committee.

As I have no further speakers for this afternoon, I call on the Secretary of the Committee, who would like to give the Committee some information.

Mr. BANERJEE (Secretary of the First Committee): It will be recalled that during this morning's meeting of the Committee the representative of Iraq asked about the availability of the Outer Space Committee's report (A/3120) in Arabic. I indicated that I would make inquiries and report back to the Committee.

I have now been advised to report that the document (A/3120) has now been reproduced in Arabic and is ready for distribution this afternoon. I have also been informed in this connexion that, in view of the large volume of work in Arabic and the fact that the Arabic service has yet to reach its full capacity, there have been, unfortunately, inevitable delays in reproducing on time documents in that language. The relevant services are aware of the problem and are actively pursuing a solution in order to avoid any delays and to make available on time

(Mr. Banerjee)

documents vitally needed by delegations. I have been assured that all efforts are being made to have the documentation of the Committee ready and available on time in all the working languages of the General Assembly.

Lastly, I may add that all General Assembly documents are reproduced in all working languages of the Assembly, including the Arabic language.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.